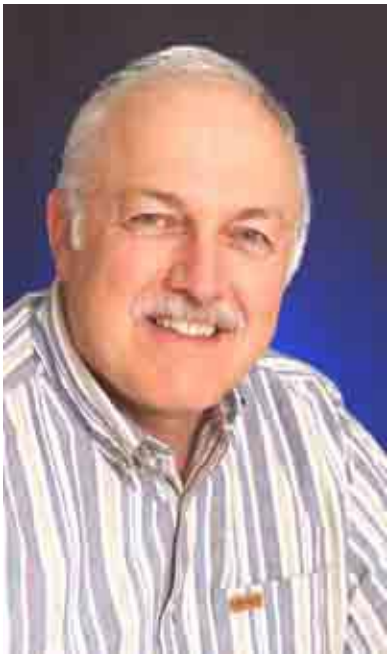
Anecdotes sought from employees involved with tank SY-101



Stewart

The impact of tank SY-101, the famous “burping” tank, on Hanford history and culture prompted Pacific Northwest National Laboratory staff scientist Chuck Stewart to take temporary leave to write a book about the tank. Some of the tank’s history has been recorded in reports and documents; but the best part is in the memories of the operators, engineers, scientists, reviewers and managers who actually struggled with it.

Those who participated in any aspect of SY-101 are invited to send recollections and anecdotes to Stewart via e-mail at charles. stewart@pnl.gov or via plant mail at K7-15. All contributions are welcome. Including a short biographical sketch with your submission will help put your story in the right context.

Tank SY-101 was the highest-priority safety issue in the entire Department of Energy complex from 1990 until 1993, when a mixer pump began stirring the waste to prevent burps. But the mixer pump inflated the frothy floating crust layer, raising the waste level alarmingly. This second emergency was defused in April 2000 by diluting the waste with 525,000 gallons of water. This action also stopped the burps. Tank SY-101 returned to service in September 2001 and received its first waste as an “active” tank in November 2002.

Stewart led the PNNL data-interpretation task for SY-101 mixer- pump operation from 1993 through 1996, and PNNL’s technical support of the level-rise remediation project from 1998 through 2001. Stewart was also actively involved in resolving the flammable gas safety issue, interpreting data for C-106 sluicing, planning single-shell tank retrieval by saltcake dissolution, and performing peer reviews of the Double-Shell Tank Life Extension Program. ■